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The Non-Subscribing Presbyterian.

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Wayside Gatherings.

An Anglican's View.

If the following be an index to the Rev. "Dick" Sheppard's conception of the church we are not surprised that his book has been given to us under the title "The Impatience of a Parson." "I am compelled with the greatest reluctance, to believe that the churches have corporately so misunderstood the message of their Founder and so mishandled and mislaid His values —the values of Fatherhood—that what survives and does duty nowadays through the churches as Christianity is a caricature of what Christ intended. There must needs be a Christian society founded on the revelation of Jesus Christ; but if that Society is to be according to the mind of Christ, I fancy it will have to be so wholly different in breadth and outlook from any church that exists today as to be scarcely recognisable as belonging to the family of churches as we know them." Mr. Sheppard writes primarily of his own church—the Anglican Church : evidently he is not familiar with the cardinal teaching of **The Unitarian Church.**

* *

Longevity.

"Adam, in spite of the necessity for hard work, hung on for a matter of nine hundred and thirty years, but the prize for longevity goes to Methuselah, who established the world's record of nine hundred and sixy-nine years; he passed away in the year of the Flood; there is no telling how long he might have lived under a dry regime."—From the "Man Nobody Knows.

* *

Change and Continuity in Religion.

"Timorous believers have ever clung to the obsolescent theology and supposed that faith itself would perish with it; but they have forgotten and do still forget the inexorable condition under which faith and knowledge exist. Since theology consists of revelation which is gradually made and of knowledge which is slowly gained, it follows inevitably that theology itself will be a changing thing. Of theology, as we trace its development from the age of the apostles to this age in which we ourselves are living, we may say with the Psalmist : "I see that all things come to an end, but Thy Commandment is exceeding broad." —Dr. Hensley Henson.

* *

"A Soft Answer. . . . . "

"Keep your temper laddie," said an old Scotsman to a rather fiery tempered son, "Never quarrel with an angry person, especially a woman—Mind ye, a soft answer pays best. It is commanded; and forby, it makes them far madder than anything you could say."

* *

A Timely Utterance.

The Rev. C. J. Street, President of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, preaching at Norwich, referred to the recent utterances of members of the "orthodox" churches and said that "had there been no Unitarian Church these welcome changes in tone could never have taken place. The faithfulness of the few had often saved the many. Holding up the ensign had a great moral effect. One course was clear; at whatever cost we could only remain loyal to the principle of freedom. And that spirit made us stand firmly to the principles of the Unitarian faith, which could and did adapt themselves to every re-statement in a higher form according to our increased knowledge."—Christian Life—Nov. 12th.

—A.W.

Notes of the Month.

The Season of Kindness and Goodwill.

When these lines reach the hands of our readers the season of Christmas will be at hand. Before it arrives we witness signs of its coming in sundry and manifold preparations all around us. Just as coming events cast their shadows before them so Christmas is always heralded by unmistakeable signs which make the whole season a gladsome time. We welcome this season of rejoicing because it brings joy to millions of hearts, even to multitudes of less fortunate brethren, who at other times have little or no comforot. The dominant note of Christmas is joy. The one thing eagerly expected during Christmas week, on Christmas Eve and Christmas morning is happiness; happiness, unalloyed as far as may be. Human life, so to speak, pauses, activities are in abeyance. The crowding and worrying of business are forgotten for a while. Self-seeking and absorbing occupations are put on one side; and a halt for a little while is made to be simply happy in the happiness of those who are around us. Thus we find each recurring year that the dominant note of Christmas is joy, happiness. We wish our readers the old, old wish, "A Happy Christmas to You."

* *

An Urgent Appeal.

The letter which will be found on another page contributed by the Rev. A. L. Agnew, B.A., Minister of York Street Church, is well worthy of the attention of all our readers. It is our privilege and duty to commend his appeal to the generous financial support of the membersof our churches generally. It may be said on some occasions with a show of truth that congregations have their work cut out to keep the home fires burning; yet, as people convinced of the necessity of altruism, of bearing one another's burdens and so fulfilling the law of Christ, a certain amount of encouragement and practical helpfulness to our own household of faith can reasonably be expected.

The resuscitation of York Street in one sense may be described as a heroic venture which has already appealed to the imaginations of many of our people. Here is an opportunity for tangible evidence of sympathetic support that will no doubt in days to come bear fruit a hundredfold. Mr. Agnew and his band of workers during the past four years have demonstrated how animation and hope have been infused into a Church that used to be in indifferent health and circumstances. Results so far have proved that brave and courageous spirits may yet appeal to the public and succeed in capturing their sympathies. Where there is liveliness and expectation of good things to come there is usually youth and vigour. This may truthfully be said of the situation in York Street. A young minister, who may be compared to a "live wire" in its capacity to infuse energy—has succeeded in gathering round him a goodly company of enthusiastic workers. Of people with so much energy, it may be said with the poet:

> "Whether we lay in a cave or in a shed,
> Our sleep fell soft on the hardest bed,
> Fresh we woke on the morrow.
> All our thoughts and words had scope,
> We had health and we had hope,
> Toil and labour, but not sorrow."

The Appeal now issued on behalf of York Street Congregation is not a formidable venture. It is for the provision of a gallery for the Church to accommodate the large congregations that gather on Sunday evenings. The sum of £300 required is a modest one and well within the compass of our household of faith.

* *

Armistice Day and World Peace.

An even greater solemnity marked Armistice Day on November 11th this year than on the previous occasions of its observance. Of one accord it was agreed that November 11th should be a day of reverence and remembrance. It is gratifying to remember that the glorification of war was conspicuous by its absence, and that its pomp and parade were kept conspicuously in the background. From the moment the Armistice was signed the friends of peace have consistently pleaded for a drastic reduction in armaments. The battle has been, through lack of support, little more than a rear-guard action in the face of stupendous odds. It is encouraging to observe nine years after the war that there are at length signs of a great change coming with regard to preparations for war. It may, at first sight, appear somewhat remarkable that Field-Marshal Sir William Robertson, a soldier of great eminence, should announce a little before the Armistice as the moral of 50 years' distinguished service in the army, an unqualified horror and abomination of war. As we have seen it stated, "Yet nothing is

more natural; for no one hates war so much as the ordinary soldier. He knows too much about it. He knows that the 'glittering prizes' which it offers are for the soldier few indeed; and dearly bought, even when they are gained, at the price of months and perhaps years of squalid misery and suffering." Sir William's statement that "hatred of war and desire for peace were probably never so general among the peoples of Europe, or so intense as they are to-day." should rouse all lovers of peace and goodwill among men to demand a reduction of armaments among the nations of the world. We who hope and work and pray for the coming of the kingdom of God among the peoples of the earth have a right to expect, in accordance with the Field Marshal's message, "that the statesmen responsible will redouble their efforts to give practical effect to these sentiments"—hatred of war and desire for peace—"by devising some way of reducing the present costly scale of armaments for which no adequate justification is apparent." Sir William's manly and soldierly protest against the waste and destruction of war and i s futility is likely to bear fruit in the near future. On November 11th a London newspaper published messages from leaders of new paper thought, who have a controlling in eres in practically all the influential and widely read newspapers in the country. Their messages are unanimous in asking for drastic limitations of armaments and a peaceful solution of international disputes. It would be very difficult indeed to exaggerate the effect of their action upon the trend of public opinion. Lord Cecil, writing to one of the newspapers concerned, said, "Not only now have we the assured support of papers like yourselves and others I could mention with regard to the need of disarmament, but also, I take it, from the names you print to-day, you are now reinforced by an imposing army of o her popular British newspapers. This is a most cheer ul and hopeful sign." May the dawning of that day soon arrive when "nation shall not lift up sword against, nation neither shall they learn war any more."

GOD OF THE HILLS.

God of the hills, grant me Thy strength
To go back into the city without faltering,
Strength to do my daily task without tiring,
and with enthusiasm,
Strength to help my neighbour who has no hills
to remember.

J. B.

Big Ulster Hall Rally.

Address by Rev. C. W. Townsend.

Under the auspices of the Unitarian and Free Christian Laymen's League a great united service of the Unitarian congregations was held in the Ulster Hall on Sunday evening, when the special preacher was Rev. C. W. Townsend, missionary minister of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association. Taking as his subject, "Creative Will and the Religious Life," Rev. Mr. Townsend spoke in convincing and impressive style. Prior to the service an organ recital was given by Mr. Albert Taylor, L.R.A.M., A.R.C., the soloists being Miss L. V. Gordon, L.R.A.M., who was heard in "Abide with Me," and Mr. J. A. Laird, who sang, "How Lovely Are Thy Dwellings."

Taking for his text the Golden Rule of Jesus, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you do ye even so to them," he stressed particularly the words, "Whatsoever ye would—do ye," and his chief matter of emphasis was the clamant need for more imagination in the religious life. Unitarians were noted for being at one and the same time free thinkers and Christians, but the preacher went on to show that while the rationalist note had been very important in past days they had now realised more than ever before that there could be no real freedom of the mind apart from the emancipation of the imagination. He quoted the words of Sir Oliver Lodge with a view to demonstrating that there need be no fear of the exercise of imaginative reason in the creative evolution of the thought of God and His purposes for human society.

Great Christian Duty.

"I doubt," continued the preacher, "if it is given to man to think out a clear and consistent system higher and nobler than the real truth. Our highest thoughts are likely to be nearest to reality, they must be stages in the direction of truth, else they would not have come to us and been recognised as highest. God's diffculty with us does not lie so much in our sinfulness as in our dulness. His great plan is not in working out the tiger and the ape from human nature so much as the working out of the old donkey. Vision, for lack of which the people perish, is dependent on the will to live. The great Christian duty is not only the development of imagination in the seer and the poet and the artist,

but also the cultivation of the absolute Christian necessity of the growth of imagination in the member of Parliament, the town councillor, and the average citizen."

In conclusion, the preacher said that imagination, in the sense in which he stressed it, was reason working at its highest creative pitch to the glory of God and the everlasting benefit of human society.

The service was conducted by Rev. D. J. Williams, Moderator of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland. The objects of the Laymen's League are to promote the worship of God and the love and service of mankind in the spirit of Jesus.

Sermon.

By Rev. S. P. Whitehouse.

THE BIBLE OF ORTHODOXY AND THE BIBLE OF HISTORY.

Text, 2 Cor. 3 : 6 : "—the letter killeth but the spirit giveth life."

The Bible of orthodoxy is a myth ; it has no existence outside the human mind.

The Bible of history is a reality ; it has come into existence in the ordinary way and may be studied as a fact of history.

Orthodoxy says in effect, 'here is a Book which God has placed in your hands for your special benefit.'

History says, 'here is a collection of sacred writings which God has no more placed in your hands than he has placed the stars in your hands.'

If those strictly orthodox people who try to read the Bible in the same way as they read a newspaper published yesterday in London, would only realise what a profound distinction there is between what they imagine the Bible to be and what it actually is, we should be spared some of the absurd and childish statements which cause many thinking men and women to throw over religion and all connected with it.

It cannot be emphasised too strongly that the Bible was not written for us any more than the stars were made for us. The writers knew nothing of us when they wrote. They wrote primarily for people of their own age and generation and would no doubt have been surprised even at the suggestion that their writings would be read by people living twenty centuries afterwards.

In spite of the fact that the Biblical writings, like all writings, are conditioned by the thought and sentiment of the period to which they belong, they are torn from their historical setting, stripped of all their native associations and placed in the modern setting of twentieth century thought as though they could be read and understood with as much ease as a newspaper is read and understood.

The worst enemy of the Bible is ignorance. Consequently, many who set themselves up as friends of the Bible are really its enemies, surprised as they would be to know it.

So long as they remain ignorant of the Bible of history and of what it teaches, ignorant of the history of the Hebrews and of the surrounding nations, so long will they continue to make absurd and childish statements in the name of religion, thus repelling many who might otherwise be sympathetic.

The Bible cannot be understood apart from the study of history any more than the sun can be understood apart from the study of the heavens.

Hebrew and Greek scholars have spent their lives on the study of the Bible without being able to answer all the questions that naturally arise in connection with it, yet every city is full of street corner orators and so-called religious leaders who are prepared to tell their listeners all about it.

If it were not for the fact that many of these well-meaning people are in deadly earnest one could afford to smile at such things.

As it is one is sometimes overwhelmed at the tragedy of it all and appalled at the task confronting all thinking men and women—that of getting people to realise the difference between superstitition and religion, between the Bible they think they have and the Bible they actually have, between the Bible of orthodoxy and the Bible of history.

God has given us the Bible, it is true, not in a miraculous sense but in the same sense as He has given us this wonderful universe and all that it contains, including life itself. This does not exhaust God's great gifts.

He has also endowed human beings with intelligence so that they can prove all things, both inside and outside the Bible, and hold fast to those that are good.

It is this Divine gift of intelligence which enables us to see design and purpose written

all over this marvellous universe, to detect the same Great Spirit at work in the heavens above and on the earth beneath, to prefer spiritual light rather than material darkness, to take little notice of the Biblical account of Balaam's ass that spake or Joshua's sun that stood still and admire the beautiful idealism in the Sermon on the Mount or be filled with awe and reverence by Paul's great hymn of Love.

So long as we refuse to use the intelligence with which we have been endowed, and keep to the strict letter of the Bible, (or rather try to do so because no one can accomplish it) so long shall we be encumbered by the shackles of superstitition.

If we would rid ourselves of these shackles and enter into the freedom of true religion we must discard the letter and try to capture the underlying spirit, the religious spirit that produced the Bible, that still moves among its pages and that still animates man and woman of this twentieth century and that will go on animating men and and women as long as this world lasts.

Samuel Craig Nelson Lowry.

An Appreciation.

People of Downpatrick and a much wider area beyond it need not to be reminded of Mr. Lowry's public spirit and disinterested services. Those who had his friendship, as the writer had for over forty years, must have observed in him ample evidence of sterling character and many admirable qualities.

True to his word and firm of purpose, a man of clean life and honour bright; a good public speaker on occasion and ready with apt phrase of appreciation or compli ment; courteous and good-tempered, genial in bearing, at ease without effort, owing to essential simplicity of charac er in whatever company he found himself; rich in a gift fo making and keeping friends, and conciliatory even to a would-be enemy, for he consistently refused to accept anyone as such; notably considerate to women, and very fond of children, to whom he delighted in playing the part of kind uncle whether related in blood or not; always sympathetic and cheerful; ready to advise when consulted and sound in judgment of men and circumstances, playing a useful part in the community from youth to age, ever ready to help in any good work or honest sport; charitable, with a large tolerance towards his fellows, freely recognising the good in all men and not looking for the bad—was this not a man whom we should be glad to have known, whom his intimates may well mourn as a brother, and the whole community cherish in memory as a worthy citizen.

Even in his last illness, to all the friends, and they were many, who visited him, he showed himself cheerful and patient, keenly interested to his last hour in their welfare, and calmly resigned to his approaching end. Life is the poorer for his loss, and those who knew him best will feel it most deeply.

The NON-SUBSCRIBING PRESBYTERIAN, some years ago, said, Mr. Lowry was a devoted worker in the Unitarian Church, Downpatrick. He was hon. treasurer for 29 years, during which time the finances of the church were put on a sound basis. In the course of his treasurership two successful bazaars were held, in 1892 and 1910, which enabled the congregation to purchase the manse, renovate the church, instal heating apparatus, and improve the congregational property.

Correspondence.

[The Editor is not responsible for the views expressed by correspondents].

To the Editor of THE NON-SUBSCRIBING PRESBYTERIAN.

8 College Park East,
Belfast.
14th Nov., 1927.

Dear Sir,—Might I be allowed a few lines to draw attention to the Public Appeal which is being made by York Street Congregation for funds to build a gallery in the Meeting House. As you are aware, four years ago there was practically no congregation in York Street. To-day the active membership exceeds 300, and it is still growing. The church has been almost rebuilt and for this purpose and for current expenses over £2,000 have been raised amongst our members, the majority of whom are working people. It will be understood that it would be utterly impossible for them to shoulder the burden of the proposed gallery but the need is obvious. Last Sunday evening there were 600 people in the church which seats 250. This was a quarter of an hour before service and our own members had been asked to stay away to leave room.

The doors were closed and several parties from our country churches had to be turned away. This is a regular occurrence. The loss in possible new members and in converts to our Faith is deplorable enough, but it is aggravated by the thought that could we but accommodate some of these our financial difficulties could be made much easier. It is under these circumstances that we appeal for the first time in four years of continual struggle, to our friends. We would point out that our appeal is not for renovations or improvements but simply and solely for providing accommodation. Such an appeal would not be made in vain in any Denomination and in ours it should be even welcome. Contributions may be sent to Mr. John Chambers, 17 Willowholme Street, Belfast, or direct to me, and the smallest will help.—Yours truly,

A. L. AGNEW.

Dear Mr. Editor.—You have admitted a contribution from A. S. C. which like that of "Senex" is painfully suspicious of autobiography and church dogmatism, unequalled in my long experience, to say nothing of unbecoming statements about public-houses. Let me say that a Professor under whom I sat for two sessions told his class, of whom I was one, that distilling was known in many lands, and from the earliest times—the appetite largely determined by climate, so that light wines, etc., were to be found in warm climates and the stronger drink in colder latitudes, thus constituting a law of nature; and moreover, that fruits became alcoholic in the process of digestion, pointing out also that alcohol was the basis of many drugs and perfumes, which latter I may say in passing, are largely consumed now by what they used to be. I had the chance of putting these latter matters before my dear departed friend, Dr. Gawn, who said quite rightly, grape sugar and sugars generally are half alcohol. In fact I have a book on Chemistry containing such expressions as half-alcohol with regard to sugars. Let me again urge upon fathers and brethren and parents the advice of the Protestant Primate of all Ireland, to begin early with the young by Bands of Hope, etc., so that they may grow up with sound minds in sound bodies. I am sure the "Whig" is most read by clerical and lay readers of our Church. In the issue of Monday, 14th inst., there is a review of a book entitled "Confessions of a Rum Runner," which I beseech all and sundry to read, mark, and inwardly digest. Let me

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ask you Sir, to print these sentences from the review: "His narrative, which bears the stamp of truth, is hardly calculated to enhance one's opinion either of those who administer the prohibition law or those whose business it is to evade it. According to the author, many of the officials are corruptible, and the amount paid to them is only a fraction of the total sum expended in 'graft' It varies, he says, between 6 and 12 per cent. of the entire turnover. In one area he estimates the cash received by the officials in one small area of a hundred square miles at not less than twenty-five million dollars, and it may be double that amount. There is much talk of rum-running by air, but the quantity brought in by planes is negligible."

Yours very sincerely,

JAMES KENNEDY.

16/11/17.

The above letter was submitted to one of our correspondents who has sent the following reply.—EDITOR.

Dear Mr. Editor.—Your venerable correspondent, the Rev. James Kennedy, has made reference in his last two contributions to your well-conducted magazine to a short article of mine, headed "Knowledge and Strong Drink" which appeared in your October issue. You have been good enough to offer me the opportunity of saying a few words in justification of my statements, and in doing so I deprecate anything in the nature of controversy. I feel sure we are both working for the same end, though our methods may be different. I certainly did not intend to introduce anything of an autobiographical kind, but as Mr. Kennedy seems to think I have done so, let me supply the omission to the extent of saying that in my boyhood days I had the great good fortune to fall under the influence of the late John Smyth of Lenaderg, a gentleman of blessed memory. At his suggestion I signed the pledge and since that day—now some 45 years ago—I never saw any cause to make me wish to be released from it. Mr. Kennedy's next point has to do with the history of distillation. So far as my reading goes, I find that distillation was known to the Chinese many centuries ago. Through the Moors and Spaniards it reached Ireland about 1260 A.D., where it was practised by the monks. Its discovery however, is generally attributed to Casa, an Arabian chemist of the eleventh century The process, therefore, has been carried on for a considerable time. But the distillation of strong drink demands great skill in the use of intricate apparatus. It does not appear to have anything to do with climate. Nature does not spontaneously produce ardent spirits anywhere; and both the manufacture and the use are found in warm as well as in cold latitudes. Alcohol is certainly a very useful thing. It will drive an engine. It will burn in a lamp. It will dissolve many substances, otherwise insoluble. And so it is largely employed in drugs, as Mr. Kennedy points out.

Tinctures of different kinds are solutions in alcohol. No other solvent would serve the purpose so well. If space permitted I should like to go into fermentation. The subject is interesting and tempting, but I must forbear. I am fully in agreement with your much respected correspondent about the desirability of instilling temperance principles into the children. Bands of Hope seem to have gone out of fashion to some extent lately, unfortunately. There are so many other organizations making appeal to boys and girls and all of them useful. But the Band of Hope has a distinct province of its own; and in my opinion no congregation is doing all that might reasonably be expected from it that neglects to encourage the formation of such a society. About Prohibition, I did not say a single word in my article. Mr. Kennedy seems to feel strongly on that point. It must be admitted that the newspaper reports are contradictory. Most of the matter that appears in print is undeniably propaganda. The trade is rich, and no expense is spared to cultivate opinion through the Press. Provincial newspapers are full of letters on the failure of Prohibition; and these productions, mostly anonymous, raise the suspicion that offices of trade organizations know most about them. One consideration will carry weight with all thoughtful people. The citizens of the United States have shown no desire to end Prohibition. They seem determined to keep it, and so long as this is the case, we must hold that the opinion of those who ought to know best, Prohibition is a good and desirable thing. One country in Europe has tried the experiment. Finland in 1920 established Prohibition. There has recently been an election, and this question was the main issue. The result was that the Prohibitionists returned over 150 out of 200 candidates, and have a majority of

over three to one pledged to maintain the law. Those who have tried it seem to believe in it.—SENEX.

Hearty congratulations to the Rev. James Kennedy, who reached on November 21st his 85th birthday, and is now entering on his 86th year. Our readers will join with us in wishing him a happy and peaceful time in the evening of his days.

"The Makers of Meadville Theological School."

By Frances A. Christie.
Boston: The Beacon Press.

This is an interesting and succinct account of the rise and development of one of the training colleges in America for ministers of the Liberal Faith. Founded in 1844 when only Harvard was available.

Beginning as a school for training Bible Christian Teachers, it gradually became more and more markedly Unitarian, while still retaining its freedom and welcome for students of other denominations. There have been the usual differences and withdrawals in its history. But beginning without almost any pecuniary support, it has to-day become one of the most effective training schools for Unitarian Ministers.

In face of the difficulties which to-day face students for the Non-Subscribing Ministry in the North of Ireland, the story of the rise of this school, the difficulties it has surmounted and finally overcome, should make it interesting reading for ministers and students of our denomination.

The Immense Power of Desire.

People whose lives are passed in simple and lowly walks often think they have no influence upon life. Such ideas are both mistaken and mischievous; and they tend to limit active impulses toward goodness.

Every good deed, thought and aspiration, helps to preserve the beauty of human life. Healthy interests and holy desires keep alive the passion for righteousness, and, it is such influences as these which keep corporate life sweet, clean and wholesome. Love of justice, disdain of wrong, appreciation of beauty, joy in truth and a fixed will to keep free from the things which blight and mar character, or hinder it from bearing fruit, are all rich contributions to a well ordered personal life, apart from which there can be no satisfactory national or corporate life. They are qualities which are beyond price and they may abide among simple folk as well as among the folk of high estate.

Dr. Lyman Beecher said: "It is a good thing to have money. It is a good thing to have the things which money can buy, but it is a greater thing to have the things which money cannot buy." We may possess them in rich profusion; but they will not fall upon mankind like rain from the skies. They can only be reaped as a harvest of intense desires, steadfast faith, and growth in the things of the spirit.

Desire may not possess much value, but it cannot be escaped. No one has seen gravitation, but its reality is undoubted, and its effects are about us.

In like manner desire is an unseen power. Sometimes, it takes man to the heights at other times down to the depths. It may lead to love of home, kith and kin, to clean and orderly living, truth and self respect—good will to others—happy and choice friendship, art, poetry, music and a multitude of other good things, which are the fruits of desire. On the contrary, desires may lead toward less lovely paths of life, but, whatever form they take they have a knack of shaping our doings and creating the spirit which is taken unto every association and sphere of activity.

That is why political philosophers say, "mankind is as well governed as it deserves to be." Thus, simple as it may seem, the strong, sturdy, steadfast citizen may make a very substantial contribution to the influences which mould corporate life. Statesmanship has many problems to solve, but they are oft associated with consequences of low desires. Policemen are not needed to conduct people home from church, but they are often needed to look after people who despise the ministry of the church. They who live clean, simple God-fearing lives really constitute the saviours of society, and their virtues pay in pounds, shillings and pence as well as in the peace of the world.—A.C.S.

"There came a stranger, yestereen,
I put food in the eating place
Drink in the drinking place,
Music in the listening place,
And in the name of the Triune
He blessed me and my house
My cattle and my dear ones,
And the lark sang in her song
'Often, often, often, comes the Christ in the stranger's guise,
Often, often, often, comes the Christ in the stranger's guise.'"

—Old Celtic rune.

The Discovery of God.

Rev. C. W. Townsend.

Light and understanding and insight for our times are dependent upon the realisation that the fundamental factor in the evolutionary process of our day is the *Joy of Life*. If I am reading the signs of the times aright it really looks as though Israel Zangwill's prayer has been answered abundantly—

O Youth of the world, come again
And exchange our sluggish sigh
For the rage of a wild white main
That pants and tugs at its chain,
And leaps at the throat of the sky.

The world is not slipping into the spiritual death of stagnation to-day. We are all very much alive with an amazing exuberance and zest which, while very disturbing and unsettling to the placid souls of a bygone age, is full of promise and potentiality for the days to come. Let those who may, prate of the folly and the superficiality and the so-called decadence of our age. I, for one, feel that it is an unfair and inadequate estimate of the significance of the present day.

By the wisdom of the centuries I speak,
To the tune of yestermorn I set the truth ;
I, the joy of life unquestioned ; I, the Greek ;
I, the everlasting song of Youth !

Rudyard Kipling strikes the keynote of our age in those lines and reveals the governing design of the world of to-day. But this is no new and unique experience, it is the characteristic of every forward looking generation. It is as old as the dawn of human consciousness. The vitality of the Christian faith itself is seen to lie in its marvellous power to absorb and utilize for glorious ends this " Joy of life unquestioned." The inwardness of Christian experience is the romance of Eternal Life, and vital religion is the unveiling of the wondrous possibilities of the human soul. Upon the principle that " what holds attention determines action " can be built up the whole philosophy of religion ; and life is the all absorbing quest.

Surely it is only along this line that we can understand the glamour and the glory and the wonderful adventure of the early ages of Christian experience. To the developing Christian consciousness of the first century there came this message fromthe Gospel of John (xvii. 3).

" This is Life Eternal that they might know thee ; the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

" This is Life Eternal that they might know thee ; the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

This was the glory and the significance and the goal of the glowing consciousness of the new life of the first Christian century. This was what constituted the distinction between *it* and any merely pagan " joy of living " which might hitherto have been experienced. Paganism at the crest of its glory had known a wondrous joy of life, but it was not progressive, it had acquired the habit of resting its chin on its shoulder and was for ever looking backward ; it had lost morale, it had sustained " a failure of nerve " ; in religion and in philosophy it was in bondage to the past ; it was afraid of thinking, it was afraid of life, and above all it was enslaved by the fear of death. And into this age of men whose hearts failed within them because of fear came Christ's glad message of emancipation. " The Truth shall make you free." And when the truth of the religion of Jesus had wrought its transforming work and emancipated the disciples from the thraldom of fear, and revealed to them the meaning of the wistful yearning for a fuller life of which each heart was conscious, *then* came the explanation, the theory of the dynamic which moved them : " This is Life Eternal that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." All the forces of the intellect were to be added to the resources of the intuitional life, and the joy of life was to be realised as the " joy of going on and still to be " in the fellowship of the only true God, and his truest interpreter, Jesus Christ, whom he had sent.

Now, of course, our age is different ; no age can possibly be quite like any other that preceded it though there may be some points of contact and similarity. But it cannot be said of our world as it was said of the world into which Christ came—

On that hard Pagan world
Disgust and secret loathing fell,
Deep weariness and sated lust
Made human life a hell.

On the contrary, in spite of all the pessimistic diatribes of our prophets of doom, we are very much nearer heaven to-day than the race has ever been before (though I quite admit that hell may be just round the corner !) There is indeed " a way to hell even from the gates of heaven, as well as from the City of Destruction " ; John Bun-

yan is right, we are not likely to forget it. But I am not concerned with that aspect of the modern situation, for the moment. Rather would I seek to indicate the way of appreciation of the time-spirit, the way that leads to its ultimate enrichment and fulfilment. If William Blake were here to-day he would say to our generation in all its hilarity and exuberance and zest for pleasure: "If a fool would persist in his folly he would become wise." There is surely nothing wrong with the energy of our times, the wrong lies in its misapplication. The lines of life are greasy with the humidity of the atmosphere of our civilisation and the falling of the waste products of our activities, and the engine is expending its power in driving wheels that slip, and slip, and slip, and make no real satisfactory progress; and then the fires die down and the engine works sluggishly, and disillusion and realised desires come down like a fog, and pace is lost and the goal unreached. Our job to-day as disciples of Jesus Christ, the great Artist and Teacher of Eternal Life, is to blaze a trail whence the questing soul of man may emerge into fields of greater service and productivity and self-realisation. Superficially considered, our modern consciousness may be expressed in the terms of the Joy of life. But it is the Joy of the life of springtide—too often, far too often, the bloom does not set, or if it does, the drought of summer days causes the immature fruit to fall, and autumn draws in with nothing to show but barren trees only relieved by the fading glories of autumnal tints—a poor satisfaction for a world that yearns for harvest-tide. What is wrong with the present age? Joseph Mazzini said of his day:—

"The people lack faith—not that individual faith which creates martyrs but that social faith which is the parent of victory; the faith that arouses the multitudes: faith in their own destiny, in their own mission, and in the mission of the epoch."

It sounds all very fine and large! But there is something missing here. I was brought up on the Old Theology and some things which the Old Theology taught are very true. This is one of them—that faith must be preceded by repentance—repentance which means a change of mind—that repentance which changes heart and mind by giving them a new object. And it is like crying for the moon to say "the peoples lack faith" unless they can first be led to repentance. Now that sounds old fashioned enough I know; but it is perfectly true.

Is it possible for this modern consciousness of the Joy of Life to be so deepened and intensified that it may be said to have "been born from above"? Charles Gardner writes in 'Vision and Venture':—

"When St. Paul became a new creature he made conduct the fair fruit of inspiration. When William Blake travailed mightily in pain to be delivered he brought forth the Real Man, *which is our deepest modern consciousness*. He not only maintained liberty of conduct, but he freed the imagination and thence the mind."

(To be continued next month.)

Obituary.

Mr. S. C. N. LOWRY.

By the death on Friday, October 14th, of Mr. S. C. N. Lowry, there passed from our midst a staunch friend and an outstanding personality. Mr. Lowry was a man of wide sympathies, keen insight, and cultivated tastes. As a Manager in the Ulster Bank he earned the respect and esteem of all who worked with him or for him. In the town of Downpatrick where his private and professional life was so long carried out no one was more often appealed to for advice and helpful leading than our departed friend. He could appreciate a difficult situation or enter into a personal problem better and more sympathetically than any we have known. Even to the very last, when his long continued illness might have pardoned a loss of concern for outside affairs, his interest in men and in life remained keen and intimate. Mr. Lowry's knowledge of our Church was wide and well-informed;

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ORGANIST		MR. S. WHITE.
CONDUCTOR		MR. H. I. SHEPHERD.

he took a deep interest in all that affected the welfare of our congregations, and was proud of his church. Moreover, his was no superficial enthusiasm, for he gave liberally, to the support of his place of worship, and during a long period as Treasurer of the Downpatrick congregation he was instrumental in advancing and stabilising the finances of the congregation.

About two years ago, Mr. Lowry removed from Downpatrick to take up residence in Belfast, and again his unfailing cheerfulness and genial good nature won him the affectionate confidence of many friends in his neighbourhood. It was my privilege to enjoy the friendship of Mr. Lowry during a number of years, and the more intimately I knew him the more I recognised his fine qualities of mind and heart. His charitable disposition, his breadth of sympathy, his loyalty to principle, and his zeal for all good causes will long remain amongst my happy memories of a kind and public spirited Christian. The funeral took place on Monday, 17th, when amid many tokens of grief his remains were borne to their last resting place among those of his kindred, in Killyleagh, Co. Down. The services at he house and graveside were conducted by Rev. John Begg, assisted by Rev. S. E. Bowen.

MISS MINNIE BAILIE, KILLINCHY

After an illness extending over nine weeks, Miss Minnie Bailie of The Rocks, Ballyministra, Killinchy, passed away into the better life on Monday, November 14th in the 53rd year of her age. Miss Bailie was descended from one of the oldest families settled in the district at the time of the Plantation. Like all her forefathers she was a constant supporter of the Remonstrant Church and a regular attender at the Services as well as a convinced believer in Non-Subscribing principles. Unfortunately she was the youngest of the members of the family that still remain. She leaves behind an aged Uncle to whom she was devoted in an especial degree. She nursed him through a tedious illness with the utmost assiduity. She also leaves behind two aunts well advanced in years with whom she was brought up from childhood. Much sympathy is felt in the neighbourhood for her aged aunts and uncle in their dire bereavement. She was tenderly and devotedly nursed by them, and everything possible was done to secure the restoration of her health, but it was not to be ; weakness proved too much for the utmost medical skill :

"God judges by a light
Which baffles mortal sight.
In His vast world above
A world of broader love
God hath some grand employment for his son."

The funeral took place on Wednesday, November 16th to the New Meeting House Green, the Rev. D. J. Williams, officiating.

Reports.

Belfast Domestic Mission.—The Employees of the Workshops for the Blind were entertained to tea by the Missionary and some members of the Mission on Friday, October 21st at 7-30 p.m., after which a Concert was provided by the following artistes : Songs from Mrs. James Andrews, Mrs. S. Ervine, Misses Burnett, A Beattie, H. Johnstone, G. Lewis, and M. M'Kane. Messrs. S. Clarke, G. Hatch, and H. Shepherd. Recitations from Mrs. E. R. Jackson and Miss Eileen Millar, Miss F. Newham ably officiating as accompanist. An expression of thanks was given by one of the blind guests, and after gifts of fruit and flowers the guests departed, delighted with their evening's entertainment.

* *

Ballycarry.—Harvest Services at Ballycarry were held on the 3rd Sunday in October and as usual when the Rev. A. L. Agnew is the preacher, the church was crowded to overflowing, listening enthralled to a rousing sermon.

Special music was rendered by the choir—the church was decorated rather more profusely than usual. Mr. Campbell of Whitehead presided at the Carnegie organ in his usual masterly style. Contributions of flowers, fruits and vegetables were received from Messrs. A. Burns, D. Miller, J. Dixon, T. Robinson, R. Campbell, A. Ellis and J. M'Kee. Also the Misses Hamilton Connor, Rice, Service, Wisnom, Mrs. Douglas, and the Sunday School Children. The ladies assisting at the decorations were Mrs. Millar, the Misses Hamilton, M'Kee, Connor, Rice, and Mr. Robert Millar, and other young people of the Congregation.

* *

Cairncastle Old Meeting House.—Harvest Services were held at 4 o'clock on Sunday, October 16th and at half past seven on the following day. The service on Sunday was led by the Rev. S. P. Whitehouse of All Souls', Belfast, who preached an inter-

esting and edifying sermon. The organ was played at both services by Mrs. James Tweed of Larne ; there was an augmented choir. Members of the Glenarm, Ballyclare and Larne Congregations were present at the Sunday Service, there being upward of thirty from Larne including the Rev. John Begg. The church was decorated as usual with grain and flowers and some dozens of lighted candles ; and festoons of ivy (some of them embellished with corn and buckies) crossing each other over the heads of the worshippers : most of the ivy was provided by two young men of the Glenarm Congregation, who must have taken a good deal of trouble to gather so much from the trunks of larch trees. On Monday the service was led by the Rev. Eustace Thompson of Cairncastle.

Clough.—The Harvest Thanksgiving services were held on Friday evening and Sunday morning and evening, October 7th and 9th. The meeting-house was beautifully decorated by the ladies of the congregation with flowers, corn, fruit, and vegetables ; George Allen, Esq., Mountpottinger kindly lent a magnificent collection of plants for the occasion. Friday night service was conducted by Rev. A. L. Agnew, Belfast, who preached an inspiring sermon. Mr. Senior, Belfast, officiated on Sunday morning and gave an interesting discourse. In the evening, Rev. V. Allen, Callow, Downpatrick, occupied the pulpit for the first time in Clough and his service was highly appreciated by the congregation. The attendance at the three services was good and the collection on Sunday evening was to be given in aid of Downpatrick Infirmary The soloists were—Miss M'Murray, Downpatrick, on Friday evening and Miss Rainey, Belfast on Sunday morning and evening, whose services were of a high standard and worthy of all praise. We thank all who gave their help so readily not forgetting the members of the choir and the organist Miss J. Donnan for their share in making the services so successful.

Grey Abbey.—Successful harvest services were conducted in the Non-Subscribing Church, Grey Abbey, on Sunday, 9th October. The interior of the beautiful church was most artistically decorated, and the congregations were very large. Rev. A. L. Agnew, York Street Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church, Belfast, was the special preacher, and his address was of a most interesting character, and particularly suitable for the season. Special harvest music was chosen, and the singing of the church choir was of a very high standard. Mrs. Tilson presided at the organ. The services were continued on Monday night, when there was again a large congregation, and Rev. W. H. Townley-Tilson, M.A., conducted the service.

Holywood.—The Harvest Thanksgiving Services were held on Sunday, October 30th. The Church looked beautiful with the flowers and fruits of the season tastefully placed by willing and skilful hands. The Services were conducted by Rev. S. P. Whitehouse, of all Souls' Church, Belfast, who preached appropriate sermons, and special music was rendered by the augmented choir under the direction of the organist (Mr. W. J. Harvey). There were good attendances at the services, especially in the evening, when the church was filled.

Newtownards.—In the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church, Victoria Avenue, Newtownards, on Sunday afternoon, the annual harvest thanksgiving service was held. The beautiful little church which was most artistically adorned with flowers, fruit, and vegetables, for the occasion, was completely filled with members of the congregation and friends. Rev. W. H. Townley Tilson, M.A., the minister in charge of the church, conducted the service. The praise portion of the service was heartily rendered, and it included the hymns " Rejoice, the Lord is King," " Oh, still in accents sweet and strong," " Who giveth all," and " Come, ye thankful people, come." Miss E. Ferguson presided at the organ.

Newry.—Inadvertently omission was made in the Report appearing in our last issue re Newry Harvest Festival that the service was continued on the Monday evening and the Rev. S. P. Whitehouse was the special preacher.

Women's League.—The five branches in the North of Ireland having united to form a District League, the first Quarterly Meeting was held on the 11th October in the Central Hall, Belfast, under the auspices of the (First House) branch.

Mrs. Blake Odgers, J.P., of London came over especially to address this inaugural meeting. During her visit she took the opportunity to meet each branch. At each meeting there was a very appreciative and enthusiastic audience and at the United Meeting on the 11th October the hall was filled to its utmost capacity. Represent-

ative members of the Laymen's League were present by invitation. During Mrs. Odgers week-end visit to Comber she very kindly took the Sunday evening service and this gracious act was very much appreciated by a large congregation. It is gratifying to know that already Mrs. Odgers' visit has borne fruit as one new branch is being formed and recruits are coming forward to the other branches.

* *

Women's League, Mountpottinger.—On Monday, November 14th, the Monthly Meeting of this branch was held in the Schoolroom, Mrs. E. R. Jackson presiding over the 45 members and friends gathered for the occasion. The speaker was Mr. A. C. Senior, who took for his subject "Poetry," and with his delightfully chosen quotations led his audience along pleasant paths and sought to inspire those present with his own admiration for the simple joys the poets provide. Gems from Longfellow, Cowper, Tom Brown, the Isle of Man Poet; Thomas Moore, the Irish Bard were culled for our pleasure, the whole making a delightful bouquet. A hearty vote of thanks was passed with acclamation. After a cup of tea a programme of music and recitals was enjoyed, the following taking part: Songs from Mrs. John Allen, and Miss Kathleen Boyd, with Miss Stormonth at the piano, and recitations from Miss Rhona Martin and Mrs. Jackson.

* *

Mountpottinger.—On Sundays, October 23rd and 30th the pulpit was occupied by Rev. A. Whitford and Rev. D. J. Williams respectively. The half-yearly Communion Service was held on Sunday, November 6th and was conducted by Rev. A. Davison. Unfortunately the attendance at this Service was considerably below the average for such celebrations and reflected sadly on the loyalty of members. The following Sunday saw Rev. J. J. Magill, B.A., as the preacher for the day. The Annual Sale of Work will be held in the Schoolroom on Friday, December 9th when it is hoped we shall have the support of friends. On the afternoon of Sunday, December 18th a Christmas Cantata will be rendered by an augmented Choir with the assistance of an Orchestra. For further details see the advertisement in this issue. On Sunday, December 11th, the pulpit will be occupied by Mr. R. W. Davidson, of Manchester College, Oxford.

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